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Montana State Fund Guardian

DECEMBER 1999

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It's hard to believe but 1999 is almost history. And what a year it was for Montana State Fund. In January, we delivered the first dividend in 15 years—$10 million—to our customers. We enjoyed a successful legislative session where legislation was passed that will help us operate more like a private insurance company. Our fraud program hit the $9 million milestone in savings for our customers. Our Board declared another premium rate reduction—in the last five years, premium rates have declined 44%. We kicked off "Quality Care Montana" in July to help provide the optimum care to injured workers in the most efficient way. We ended the fiscal year with a strong financial position, including a $4.04 million underwriting profit, $2.11 million in net income, and a surplus of $144.3 million. And of course, after years of planning and effort, we launched our PowerComp™ system which will bring many new benefits to our customers and provide us a foundation on which to grow into the future.

Despite all these successes, we face many challenges as we enter the 21st Century. I welcome these opportunities and believe we can and will offer even better products and service to our customers in the years ahead. I also look forward to working toward our goals with a truly exceptional team of fellow State Fund employees.

My very best wishes to you and your families for the holidays and the New Year!

LIGHTS ARE OFF...EVERYBODY'S GONE HOME

By Wes Winden

We're coming down to the wire with the end of the calendar year closing in on us rather quickly. Most everyone is probably feeling some excitement with a little apprehension, wondering what will really happen at midnight on December 31st, 1999. I've not taken any extra measures at home than I typically do in the winter months: have a full tank of gas in my car, always have plenty of food in the house and typically keep bottled water anyway. And I feel rather confident that all will work well (with a few minor glitches here and there). But what about the systems here at State Fund. What's going to happen? What's the schedule of events that are to take place? Will I be able to come in to the office on Saturday, December 31 and put in a little overtime? You know...to get those last minute Strategic Business Plan goals completed before the year ends. Will the systems be running then? And what about January 1st? Is anyone going to be here to check things out? And most importantly, what about January 3rd? We're all scheduled to come to work that day. Will the systems be up and running? Do I need to call someone first? Do I bother coming in?

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ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL CELEBRATION

By Wes Winden

The holiday celebration on December 4th was another great success. Those participating gathered at the Elks Club, kicking off the evening activities at with a smorgasbord of food, enough to feed King Arthur and his knights. Immediately following dinner, the traditional gift exchange (Chinese style) took place with "Santa" Dillavou entering the stage, golf cart and clubs in tow. He passed out gifts and as was expected, there were some exchanges of opened gifts between employees for that special.

Kay Fleming first received a wonderful stuffed teddy bear only to have it "chinesed" from her. She then excitedly received a stuffed moose, again losing it to another gift taker. In the end, she walked away with a "white elephant" gift for the evening. However, I heard that Santa showed up at her office the day after and left her a warm, fuzzy, cuddly, teddy bear.

The *SofaKings* finished off the evening with song and dance until closing. Fun was had by all with proof in the pictures (see insert). A very special thanks to the members of the Special Activities Committee for a wonderful time!

Published monthly by and for the employees of the Montana State Fund.

GONE HOME

Continued from page 1.

Well, here's what's scheduled to happen (according to the IT Department).

At 5:00 pm, December 30th...plan on going home or somewhere else because the IT Department staff is going to shut down the entire computer system as soon as they finish running necessary backups and batch processes. I mean, like, flip the switch to the "off" position. The computer system is going to stay off throughout the New Year's weekend. So don't plan on coming in to work on any last minute projects or goals that require the use of a computer.

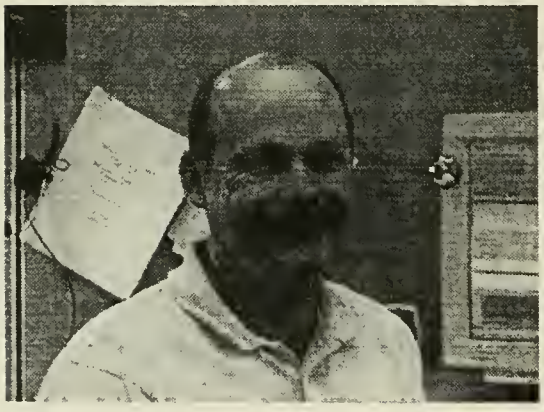
Depending upon how the rest of the world transitions into the year 2000, several IT staff plan on arriving here at State Fund around 10:00 am on January 1st. At this point, they plan on assessing the power, contacting the state's Information Systems Division (ISD) regarding the status of the Year 2000 rollover around the world, and the affect viruses are having. If everything is deemed stable, the IT staff will bring up State Fund systems and verify if the rollover was successful on all servers. Workstations will also be brought online and tested. If power is not stable or there are other threats to the computer systems such as viruses, all State Fund computer equipment will remain down until stability is reached.

If all goes well on January 1st, then the IT staff will return on January 2nd, along with representatives from each department, to run production on PowerComp™.

The IT Hotline will be kept up-to-date with the latest information as they progress through each phase. **The Hotline telephone number is 444-6507.** This line only provides information about the computer systems, though, not whether or not the building heating and lighting systems are working or whether or not we need to come into work. That's where the State Fund Disaster Recovery Plan comes into play. Unless otherwise contacted, plan on coming into work, January 3rd, 2000!

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH



Congratulations to **Larry Thomas**, Senior Claim Adjuster, Claim Department. Larry was named Employee of the Month for November 1999.

Larry has helped develop a unit cohesiveness and spirit by encouraging others and providing a valuable background of experience and knowledge to mentor group members. He works hard towards team goals and objectives by being a true team player. Very well versed in the workers' compensation laws, Larry takes the time to help others and make himself available. With exceptional communication skills, he is very effective in responding to employers, injured workers, answering their questions and keeping them updated and informed. Treating everyone with dignity and respect, Larry is a true professional!

Congratulations, Larry. You've earned this recognition!

KUDOS KOLUMN

I appreciate Marvin Kraft, Dwan Winden and Lisa Carsen for their initiative and forethought utilized to create the on-line reservation system for State Fund Pool car use. Great job! *Shawn Bubb*

We want to take a moment and thank Lynn Donnelly, Linda ward, Jeannie Glenn & the whole IT Department for taking control of and correcting the Agent Commissions problems we were encountering in the PowerComp System. Your work has made a very large impact on our producer relationships. Thank you! *Shawn Bubb, Mark Barry & Lanny Hubbard*

Enid Kalaher got off the phone with Mary Lynn at Dr. Muirhead's office in Washington. She stated she "likes calling us because we are always nice and everyone is helpful." She wishes it was this easy to deal with Medicare! She also added that Larry Thomas is always pleasant to work with. And....we've always been great at paying them in a timely manner.

Does someone you know deserve a KUDO? E-mail the message to Wes Winden for publication in the Guardian.

NEW INTRANET LOOK

By Wes Winden

If you haven't checked it out yet, take a look at our MSF Intranet web site. It's a whole new look with our logo and colors. And, I believe we've been able to modify the site to make it more user friendly, easier to get around and access those things you need or use the most. If you have any suggestions as you're moving through the site, please, don't hesitate to contact Wes Winden (X6502) or Chuck Christiansen (X5982).

IT'S A MYSTERY

By Morgan Hahn

Here's our last Mystery Employee of the CENTURY! The first person who is able to correctly identify our selected employee will win a fabulous prize (....of my choosing, and probably an after-Christmas sale special)! Next month I will announce the winner of the contest, the name of the "Mystery Employee," and give clues for the next unidentified individual. It may be your neighbor!

Last month's Mystery Employee was our very own, Chao-Cheng (Joshua) Lai in the IT Department. We had lots and lots of great guesses, but Michelle Spencer in Loss Control was our Super-Sleuth (see they were practically neighbors!). Congratulations, Michelle.

Here are this month's clues:

Pets: Our Mystery Employee has one dog and two cats.

Family: S/he comes from a family of more than 6, less than 10 kids. S/he is married and has one daughter/son (guess s/he learned a lesson from childhood). This does not count the "pet children."

Born: Mystery Employee was born out-of-state. The eastern part of the United States, to be a little more specific.

Hobbies: S/he likes to do a lot of camping, fishing and four-wheeling. Also, when time permits, ceramics and crocheting.

Favorite Treat: S/he doesn't really have one. But, I am told, the Mystery Employee likes to get Chinese food once in awhile and also likes pizza rollups (I wonder if those are served together????uggghhh!).

How do you like to spend your free time?: This Employee spends free time with daughter/son and spouse going to see them in their sports or going camping in the summer-time. In the winter-time, free time is spent playing cards with friends or watching a good movie.

If you think you know who the *Last Montana State Fund Mystery Employee of the Century* is, give me a call, or e-mail me!

Good luck!

TRAINING CALENDAR

Family Medical Leave Act: Employee Session; January 11; 8am - 10am

Family Medical Leave Act: Supervisor Session; January 11; 10am - 12pm

PowerPoint Beginning
January 13; 9am - 12pm; Computer Smith;

Win – Win Communication (VRI)
January 13; 8:30am - 10am

New Employee Orientation
January 19; 8:30am - 10am; Room 201

Quality Customer Service (PDC)
January 20; 1pm - 3:00pm

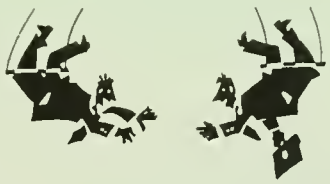
Access-Beginning
January 14; 1pm - 4pm; Computer Smith;

Word Beginning
January 24, 25, 26;
9am - 12:00pm each day

Positive Attitude (Work Life Series)
January 25; 3:30pm - 5:00pm

Early Return to Work
January 25; 8:15am - 9:45am

Getting to Know...IT Department:Part 2
January 31; 9am - 10am



HUMAN RESOURCES

Personnel changes as of December 17, 1999

New Hires
None

Departures
None

Promotions
Terry St. Clair (UW Services Tech.)
Audrey Kroll (UW Tech. Assistant)
Carolyn Perret (UW Services Assistant)

DID YOU KNOW?

By Karen Wegner

OUR CUSTOMERS

. . . Are the most important people who will ever contact this office.

. . . Are those special VIP's who call on the phone.

. . . Are not interruptions of our work—they are the reason for it.

. . . Are individuals with names and feelings.

. . . Are not people we argue with.

. . . Are not always right, but they are always . . .

THE CUSTOMER

Editor: Chuck Christiansen
Managing Editor: Wes Winden
Employee Reporters:
Morgan Hahn Karen Wegner
Jay Phillips

Please call Wes Winden, 444-6502 with comments or suggested articles.

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RESERVING STATE FUND VEHICLES THROUGH "OUTLOOK"

There are four new resources in Outlook for State Fund car pool vehicles. You can reserve a car in the same fashion as a conference room, overhead projector, etc. The resources are listed in the global address book as follows:

STF Res Car #1
STF Res Car #2
STF Res Car #3
STF Res Car #4

Marvin Kraft and Fred Lubke are responsible for managing these resources in Outlook.

To reserve a car through Outlook, follow these steps:

1. In Outlook, switch to your calendar folder. Right click anywhere on the daily layout. Select New Appointment.

2. Fill in the Subject (your name), Location (your destination), Start Time (departure) and End Times (return).

3. Click on the Attendee Availability tab. Select the Invite Others button. The global address book will appear. Select STF Res Car #1. Click OK to return to the Attendee Availability window.

4. This screen will show you the availability of a car. If there is a scheduling conflict, you have the options to: 1) either manually find a time that fits your schedule; 2) select the <<Auto Pick>> option and have the computer find one for you; 3) or select the Invite Others button again, and select STF Res Car #2, #3, or #4.

5. Once you are satisfied with your selection, simply click the Send button. This will send your e-mail meeting request to the Car Pool Resource you selected.

6. Marvin Kraft will process your request accordingly.

If you have any questions, please contact Marvin (6505) or Fred (6402).

Have a safe and happy holiday season!

1999 HOLIDAY PARTY

Santa Dillavou handing out mouthwash during the chinese gift exchange

We had a full house at this year's party!

The "SofaKings" provided the evening's music and dance entertainment.

"Psssst hey Jim! Quick, plug in your guitar, it's time to start playing!".

Continued on back.

The IT Department table. They were having just too much fun!

A little too serious looking for a Christmas party. Let's hope Brian & Maureen were not talking "business"

The "King" is back?